

Health & Safety Tip #1

The Importance of Hand Hygiene

The simple act of washing your hands can substantially reduce your risk of illness. It sounds simple, but most people are not very consistent at washing as much as they should.

So what's the problem? According to studies done by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- Only about $\frac{2}{3}$ of adults wash after using the toilet - women significantly more often than men.
- *1 in 4* adults does not wash after changing a baby's diaper.
- Fewer than $\frac{1}{2}$ of us wash after handling our pets or cleaning up after them.
- Just *1 in 3* wash after sneezing or coughing.
- Not even *1 in 5* wash after handling money, a major carrier of disease germs.
- *1 in 3* E.coli outbreaks are caused by poor personal hygiene (hand washing) by food handlers.

What's the Solution?

When done correctly, hand washing is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of infectious disease, such as a cold, the flu or infectious diarrhea.

Follow these 4 simple steps to keeping hands clean:

1. Wet your hands with warm running water.
2. Add soap and rub your hands together (away from the running water) for at least 10–15 seconds. Wash the front and back of your hands, as well as between fingers and under nails.
3. Rinse your hands well under warm running water, ensuring the water run back into the sink, not down to your elbows. Turn taps off with a paper towel and dispose in a receptacle.
4. Dry hands thoroughly with a clean towel.

For more information, visit:

www.viha.ca/health_info/handwashing.htm

